



His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with Honorary Chair of Japan's Sasakawa Peace Foundation



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On 20th September 2025, in the Patriarchal chambers of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' met with Mr Yohei Sasakawa, Honorary Chair of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (Japan).

Taking part in the meeting were also Mr Atsushi Sunami, President of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation; Mr Jumpei Sasakawa, President of the Nippon Foundation; Mr Taisuke Abiru, Senior Fellow at the Sasakawa Peace Foundation; and Archimandrite Philaret (Bulekov), deputy chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill greeted the guests and said, in particular, that over the years the Russian Orthodox Church had been involved in many initiatives aimed at upholding peace and justice on the

planet, with that sphere of activity being on particular rise during the Cold War. “And even when the Cold War was over, there were, and unfortunately still are, conflicts going on in many places; that is why we see it as our duty to take part as much as we can in the peace-making activities, on our own and in cooperation with our partners,” His Holiness added.

During the meeting, Patriarch Kirill also spoke about the spiritual ties between Russia and Japan and the ministry of the Japanese Autonomous Orthodox Church, the existence of which was the result of the work of Russian missionaries, especially St. Nicholas of Japan.

Patriarch Kirill shared with the guests his recollections of his visits to the Land of the Rising Sun. His first visit took place in October 1970, when the Russian Orthodox Church’s delegation attended the 1st World Conference of Religions for Peace in Kyoto. His Holiness also mentioned his meetings with the Japanese Orthodox Christians and representatives of other Christian confessions, as well as the Nikolai-do Cathedral in Tokyo, where he had celebrated divine services on repeated occasions.

“We hail the mission you and your organisation carry out, and so it is with very warm feelings that I welcome you to Moscow,” His Holiness also said, “I hope that our meeting will make its contribution to further development of the relationships between the Russian Orthodox Church and non-governmental organisations in Japan.”

Mr Yohei Sasakawa thanked the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church for the warm welcome and said he was honoured to meet with him.

He told about his humanitarian work, to which he devoted most of his life. Mr Sasakawa mentioned, in particular, his relief efforts aimed at helping people affected by the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant accident and his work to eliminate leprosy by, among other things, distributing free medicaments.

The guest also mentioned St. Nicholas of Japan, in particular, the diary Archbishop Nicholas had kept for several decades. His diaries for the period from 1870 to 1911, which had been considered lost, were found by the Japanese Professor Kennosuke Nakamura in the Central State Archive in Leningrad in 1979. It turned out that Bishop Sergiy (Tikhomirov), successor to Archbishop Nicholas, had sent the diaries to the Most Holy Synod in St. Petersburg. And more recently, in March 2004, with the assistance of, among others, Yohei Sasakawa, who at the time headed the Nippon Foundation, a Russian publishing house **issued** a five-volume book of St. Nicholas’s diaries which were later **translated into the Japanese language**.

As Mr Sasakawa also pointed out, despite and in view of the current political difficulties in Russia-Japan relations, it is essential to maintain and develop ties between the two countries’ non-

governmental institutions and promote humanitarian cooperation for the sake of the future.

The guest also noted that he was deeply touched by the Russian Orthodox Church's efforts aimed at establishing peace in various parts of the world and expressed his hope that the Moscow Patriarchate and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation would be developing cooperation in this sphere.

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